

**1. While on duty, a doctor treating COVID-19 patients receives a call from her husband. He has tested positive for COVID-19. What should the doctor be doing now? Should she leave the patients and leave for her home to take care of her sick husband or should she continue to serve the hospitalised COVID-19 patients? Share your views.**

**Demand of the question:**

It expects students to write from both the perspectives of doctor and also as a wife. Students should also write about the ethical questions raised by the given situation and possible steps the doctor can take.

**Introduction:**

The Covid-19 pandemic epidemic is a test not just of our mettle but also of our morals. The Covid frontline warriors especially the doctors are placed in tough ethical dilemmas that are influencing their professional ethics, morals, societal ethics, etc.

**Body:**

The doctor is subject to a number of competing duties:

1. A duty to patients
2. A duty to protect oneself from undue risk of harm
3. A duty to one's family
4. A duty to colleagues whose work loads and risk of harm will increase in one's absence
5. A duty to society

The given situation puts doctor into an ethical dilemma – where she has tough choice between her professional duty and social duty.

Her professional medical ethics wants her to take care of patients assigned to her, while social and emotional aspect demands her to take care of her husband.

She cannot leave patients in hospital and priorities husband's wellbeing as:

- it can put herself, her hospital staff – patients, her other family members at risk.
- Ethically it shows disrespect to oath and professional duty of doctor.
- This action also stands against social ethics as even family; society will be at risk.

So, on-duty doctor on getting call from Covid positive husband can take following steps:

- Tell her husband to be calm, and take necessary precaution, ask him to call local authorities and follow the established procedure.

- As chances of doctor herself being infected are high, she should responsibly inform the hospital authorities and her staff and further take necessary precautions.
- Get herself isolated and keep in touch with her husband and other family members via video call; ask about symptoms and whether local authorities are taking necessary steps.
- Even inform possible contacts to her and her family members about possible risk.
- As she knows the drill well, help family members and other affected in getting all necessary help from government authorities.
- Get herself tested and check on tests of other family members, hospital staff, etc.
- Keep in constant touch with family members, hospital staff via messages, audio-video calls and motivate each other.
- If her husband has serious symptoms – motivate him, give all positive energy. Though emotional very daunting but a very crucial and practical necessity, discuss about all financial, insurance, investment, etc. related matters. This will help the family in worst case scenarios.

**Conclusion:**

With right ethical choices, selfless duty and responsibility we can sustain our mettle and morals even against the toughest challenge to humanity, which will lay the foundations of prosperous and healthy future.

**2. What is environmental ethics? Does the ongoing pandemic teach us anything about environmental ethics? Examine.****Demand of the question:**

It expects students to define environmental ethics. Students also need to write about lessons learnt from pandemic about environmental ethics.

**Introduction:**

Pandemics like Ebola, Zika, MERS, SARS etc. had alerted human species about the imbalance in relation between humans and Environment. Ignorance causing Covid-19 pandemic has almost stopped the world for human species and has nudged humans to introspect on their relationship with environment.

**Body:**

The field of environmental ethics is about human beings' ethical relationship with the natural environment. It deals with societal attitudes, actions, and policies of humans directed towards environment.

Ongoing pandemic teaches following lessons about environmental ethics:

- **Simplicity of existence:**  
Survival can be sustained with human basic needs like food, clothing, shelter and love. Humans can exist without extra material luxurios.
- **False sense of Ownership and leadership in Conservation:**  
Pandemic bust the myth of humans as conservator of the environment. Instead, human species are conserved by environment and any ignorance from human species has consequences.  
Example: Mangroves worked as barrier in Amphan cyclone – saving loss of life and property
- **Effectiveness of self-restrain:**  
Clean air, water, sighting of animals in their natural habitats, etc. calls for more emphasis on restrain. Even without funds, innovation, etc. positive change in climate can be brought through self-restrain
- **Fundamental rights of Environment:**  
Even environment and its entities have right to leave with dignity, freedom of movement, privacy, etc.  
Example: A pregnant elephant killed by feeding explosive stuffed pineapple, rumours causing alive dumping, poisoning of chicken chicks, culling and abandoning of pet animals highlight disregard to other right. This highlights lack of compassion and empathy of humans towards nature.
- **Selfless responsibly determination can overcome even the toughest of all challenges.** Such an ethical framework used to tackle pandemic can be used to tackle environmental challenges.
- **Inter-connect and dependency:**  
Humans are a part of a large family and for stable functioning of nature all have to work as a unit. For cordial relation we need to respect contribution of each entity in this ecological family. As the youngest member of this family humans are more dependent on nature.
- **Subjectivity in concept of equality concept:**  
Some animals are privileged than others, causing inequality in treatment. Care and Death of Pet, exotic animals are empathetic while feral and consumption based animals are neglected. Thus need to redefine concept of equality which includes environment.

**Conclusion:**

Learning from environment and practising the teachings in our daily life can bring in moral revival of humanity which even includes environment. Thus a new beginning towards a prosperous, harmonious and sustainable world.

### 3. How severe is the issue of mental health in India? Examine. Do social stereotypes and prejudices aggravate this problem? Examine.

#### Demand of the question:

It expects students to write about severity of mental health in Indian context. Students should also write how social stereotypes and prejudices contribute in increasing this severity.

#### Introduction:

Threat of COVID-19 epidemic, its related rumours and side effects of social, economic stress has aggravated the existing mental health issue in India. Further, social stereotypes and prejudices aggravate the existing mental illness leading to rise in number of suicides.

#### Body:

Increasing number of Students, farmer's, female suicides highlight the neglect of mental disease.

Severity of mental health issue in India:

- As per a government study, Extreme anxiety amid the covid-19 pandemic has left over 50% people feeling depressed
- India also had the third-highest female suicide rate (14.7) and nearly a fourth of male suicides in the world
- As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data every hour one student commits suicide in India
- According to a Lancet report, suicide rates in India are highest in the 15-29 age group — the youth population.
- Inadequacy in infrastructure as well as in numbers of psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses cause gap in treatment of mental illness.

Social stereotypes and prejudices are preconceived opinions, feelings for an entity which are not based on reason. They are mostly negative in nature and negative behaviour against the concerned entity.

Social stereotypes and prejudices aggravate mental health issue in following ways:

- Family, Educational institution, Society, Traditions and Culture, etc. inculcate mental illness as weakness in personality and character. This leads to lack of disclosure and rise in depression.

- High Expectations from youth: They are taught to be responsible, ambitious, competitive. Good job and a settled life is worshipped and others are condemned.
- Wrong notions of success – Money, luxury, status, material success are wrongly considered as measure of success. Causing neglect of real reason of mental illness
- Rapes, sexual harassment victims are considered as women of questionable character.
- Stereotypes and prejudices are negative consequences of ignorance and misinformation

Participation by family members, Yoga-meditation, sensitization to treatment and social inclusion, community-based intervention, Mental health awareness campaigns, use of technology have yielded positive outcomes.

Attitudes which hinder recognition and appropriate help-seeking of mental illness can be countered by write information.

**Conclusion:**

Thus, prevalence of mental illness is not just an individual problem, but a societal problem which can be effectively dealt with compassionate collective efforts of society.

